

California Groundwater Elevation Monitoring

authorized by SBX7 6, enacted in November 2009

Background

In California, groundwater accounts for about 30 percent of the total water supply. During dry years, it is at least 40 percent of the supply. With a projected population of 46 million by the year 2020, California's reliance on groundwater will increase significantly.

In order to protect and sustain the state's precious groundwater supply, proper management of this limited resource is imperative. Monitoring groundwater elevations is a fundamental component of successful groundwater management.

However, groundwater elevation monitoring networks have not been adequately established for all of California's groundwater basins. This lack of data limits the ability to accurately monitor groundwater conditions in basin aquifers, and limits our ability to adequately plan for future water supply demands.

Groundwater elevation monitoring is crucial to managing our state's groundwater resources. For more information on California's groundwater, please visit DWR's Groundwater Information Center at:

www.water.ca.gov/groundwater

Overview of SBX7 6

In 2009, the Legislature passed SBX7 6, which establishes, for the first time in California, collaboration between local monitoring parties and DWR to collect groundwater elevations statewide and that this information be made available to the public.

SBX7 6 provides that:

- Local parties may assume responsibility for monitoring and reporting groundwater elevations.
- DWR work cooperatively with local Monitoring Entities to achieve monitoring programs that demonstrate seasonal and long-term trends in groundwater elevations.
- DWR accept and review prospective Monitoring Entity submittals, then determine the designated Monitoring Entity, notify the Monitoring Entity and make that information available to the public.
- DWR perform groundwater elevation monitoring in basins where no local party has agreed to perform the monitoring functions.
- If local parties (for example, counties) do not volunteer to perform the groundwater monitoring functions, and DWR assumes those functions, then those parties become ineligible for water grants or loans from the state.

For text of the chaptered legislation, please visit the official California Legislative Information website at:

www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/09-10/bill/sen/sb_0001-0050/sbx7_6_bill_20091106_chaptered.html



MAJOR DEADLINES

On or before January 1, 2011:

Parties seeking to assume groundwater elevation monitoring functions must notify DWR (WC section 10928)

On or before January 1, 2012:

Monitoring Entities shall begin reporting seasonal groundwater elevation measurements (WC section 10932)



Frequently Asked Questions

What is a groundwater Monitoring Entity?

A Monitoring Entity is a designated entity that conducts or coordinates the monitoring of groundwater elevations for a basin or sub-basin.

Who is authorized to be a groundwater elevation Monitoring Entity?

- Watermasters or court appointed water management engineers
- Groundwater management agencies with statutory authority who are monitoring groundwater elevations prior to January 1, 2010
- Water replenishment districts
- Local agencies that manage all or part of the groundwater basin
- Local agencies implementing an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
- Counties
- Voluntary groundwater associations formed pursuant to Water Code Section 10935

Can a Monitoring Entity be responsible for monitoring groundwater elevations in more than one basin or subbasin?

Yes. A Monitoring Entity may be responsible for more than one basin or subbasin.

Does the Monitoring Entity have to take all of the groundwater elevation measurements?

No. The Monitoring Entity may compile groundwater elevations measured by other parties monitoring the basin or subbasin.

Where is groundwater monitoring required?

Groundwater elevation monitoring is required in all 515 alluvial basins and subbasins identified in DWR Bulletin 118 (2003). Monitoring outside of these basins and subbasins is not required.

How often will groundwater elevation measurements need to be taken?

As often as necessary to demonstrate seasonal and long-term groundwater elevations within a basin or subbasin.

Is it mandatory that all well owners participate?

No. Individual participation is voluntary in coordination with an approved Monitoring Entity.

Which wells in a groundwater basin will be monitored?

A Monitoring Entity will propose a network of wells sufficient in number to show seasonal and long-term trends in the basin and subbasins.

Can anyone monitor my well without my permission?

No. Permission must be granted by the property owner.

Is this a short-term or long-term program?

This is a long-term program.

What are the data going to be used for?

The data will be compiled in a statewide database that is available to the public.

The data can be used by local and state entities to evaluate and monitor groundwater conditions in the basins.

On or before January 1, 2012, local groundwater Monitoring Entities will regularly and systematically monitor groundwater elevations in California's alluvial basins and subbasins in order to determine seasonal and long-term trends, and this information will be made readily and widely available to the public.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about DWR's California Groundwater Elevation Monitoring program: www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/elevation_monitoring/index.cfm